EDUCATION

COMPILED FROM THE SPEECHES AND WRITINGS OF

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Compiled and Edited by
T. S. AVINASHILINGAM

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYALAYA
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DEDICATED

TO

SRIMAT SWAMI SIVANANDAJI MAHARAJ

A Direct Disciple of Sri Ramakrishna.
To whose deep love, affection and inspiration
I owe my spiritual life.

سیوا گرام
براہ واردھا (سی-پی)

सेवाग्राम
वर्धा होकर (मध्य प्रांत)

SEVAGRAM
Via WARDHA (C. P)

Dear Avinashi,

Surely Swami Vivekananda's writings need no introduction from anybody. They make their own irresistible appeal.

Yours
Bapu

22-7-'41

INTRODUCTION

It has been my desire for some time to collect the sayings of Swami Vivekananda on Education. The present Satyagraha movement and incarceration in the Trichy Jail gave me the necessary time for it. The Swami was a great and forceful personality and his sayings on Education are as inspiring as the rest. Some of the sayings may seem to be bearing more on religion than on education. They have been included as it was the opinion of the Swami that a pure and religious life is the foundation of all education and culture.

I am deeply grateful to my revered leader Sjt. C. Rajagopalachariar for his very valuable suggestions and also to Sri K. Ramakotiswara Rao, Editor, 'Triveni', and Sri K. Arunachalam, my brother-worker in the Vidyalaya, for their kind help. We are grateful to Swami Pavitrananda, the President of the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Himalayas, the publishers of *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* for kindly giving us permission to publish this book.

The references to the various passages in *The Complete Works* have been given at the end of the book.

Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya,
Coimbatore District,
2nd July, 1943.

T. S. AVINASHILINGAM.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIFTH EDITION

We are glad that four editions of this book have come out and the fifth edition will shortly be going to print. It has been translated in many of the Indian languages. Swami Vivekananda came as a dynamic force in the rise of a New India. His words and works continue to be a force even after half a century of his passing away and will continue to be so till the end of time. for all seekers of Truth.

This book was first compiled when I was imprisoned during the 1942 freedom movement. Since then independence has been won and we are involved in the grand task of building a glorious India, which the great Swami foresaw and dreamt of. When a large reconstruction work is going on throughout the country, these words of the Swami have a great value in inspiring the thousands of men and women, who are engaged in it.

In this edition some of the chapters have been rewritten. Some new chapters, namely, Development of personality, The end and the means, What is duty, and Work like a master, have been added. We hope and pray that the revised edition will carry the message of the Master to the thousands of teachers, students and others who are engaged in the great task of education and other nation-building activities.

19-8-'57. T. S. AVINASHILINGAM.

CONTENTS

I

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.[1]

Knowledge is inherent in man, no knowledge comes from outside; it is all inside. What we say a man 'knows', should, in strict psychological language, be what he 'discovers' or 'unveils'. What a man 'learns' is really what he 'discovers' by taking the cover off his own soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge. We say Newton discovered gravitation. Was it sitting anywhere in a corner waiting for him? It was in his own mind; the time came and he found it out. All knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind; the infinite library of the universe is in your own mind. The external world is only the suggestion, the occasion, which sets you to study your own mind. The falling of an apple gave the suggestion to Newton, and he studied his own mind. He rearranged all the previous links of thought in his mind and discovered a new link among them, which we call the

Knowing is unveiling.

law of gravitation. It was not in the apple nor in anything in the centre of the earth.[2]

All knowledge therefore, secular or spiritual, is in the human mind. In many cases it is not discovered, but remains covered, and when the covering is being slowly taken off, we say 'we are learning', and the advance of knowledge is made by this process of uncovering. The man from whom this veil is being lifted is the more knowing man; the man upon whom it lies thick is ignorant; the man from whom it has entirely gone is all-knowing, omniscient. Like fire in a piece of flint, knowledge exists in the mind; suggestion is the friction which brings it out.[3] All knowledge and all power are within. What we call powers, secrets of Nature, and force are all within. All knowledge comes from the human soul. Man manifests knowledge, discovers it within himself, which is pre-existing, through eternity.[4]

All knowledge is within.

No one was ever really taught by another. Each of us has to teach himself. The external teacher offers only the suggestion which rouses the internal teacher to work to understand things. Then things will be made clearer to us by our own power of perception and thought, and we shall

Infinite power is in the soul.

realise them in our own souls.[5] The whole of the big banyan tree which covers acres of ground was in the little seed which was perhaps no bigger than one-eighth of a mustard seed. All that mass of energy was there confined. The gigantic intellect, we know, lies coiled up in the protoplasmic cell. It may seem like a paradox, but it is true. Each one of us has come out of one protoplasmic cell and all the powers we possess were coiled up there. You cannot say they came from food, for if you heap up food mountains high, what power comes out of it? The energy was there potentially no doubt, but still there. So is infinite power in the soul of man whether he knows it or not. Its manifestation is only a question of being conscious of it.[6]

The cask of glass.

The Light Divine within is obscured in most people. It is like a lamp in a cask of iron: no gleam of light can shine through. Gradually, by purity and unselfishness, we can make the obscuring medium less and less dense, until at last it becomes as transparent as glass. Sri Ramakrishna was like the iron cask transformed into a glass cask, through which can be seen the inner light as it is.[7]

You cannot teach a child any more than you

can grow a plant. The plant develops its own nature.[8] The child also teaches itself. But you can help it to go forward in its own way. What you can do is not of a positive nature but negative. You can take away the obstacles, and knowledge comes out of its own naure. Loosen the soil a little, so that it may come out easily. Put a hedge round it ; see that it is not killed by anything.[9] You can supply the growing seed with the materials for the making up of its body, bringing to it the earth, the water, the air that it wants. And there your work stops. It will take all that it wants by its own nature.[10] So with the education of the child. A child educates itself.[11] The teacher spoils everything by thinking that he is teaching. Within man is all knowledge, and it requires only an awakening, and that much is the work of the teacher. We have only to do so much for the boys that they may learn to apply their own intellect to the proper use of their hands, legs, ears and eyes.[12]

Self-education.

That system which aims at educating our boys in the same manner as that of the man who battered his ass, being advised that it could thereby be turned into a horse, should be abolished.[13] Owing to undue domination exercised by the parents, our boys

Free growth.

do not get free scope for growth. In every one there are infinite tendencies which require proper scope for satisfaction.[14] Violent attempts at reform always end by retarding reform. If you do not allow one to become a lion, one will become a fox.[15]

Positive ideas.

We should give positive ideas. Negative thoughts only weaken men. Do you not find that where parents are constantly taxing their sons to read and write, telling them that they will never learn anything and calling them fools and so forth, the latter do actually turn out to be so in many cases? If you speak kind words to them and encourage them, they are bound to improve in time. If you can give them positive ideas, people will grow up to be men and learn to stand on their own legs. In language and literature, in poetry and arts, in everything we must point out not the mistakes that people are making in their thoughts and actions, but the way in which they will be able to do these things better.[16] The teaching must be modified according to the needs of the taught. Past lives have moulded our tendencies, and so give to the pupil according to his tendencies. Take every one where he stands and push him forward.[17] We have seen how Sri Ramakrishna would encourage

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even those whom we considered worthless and change the very course of their lives thereby! He never destroyed a single man's special inclinations. He gave words of hope and encouragement even to the most degraded of persons and lifted them up.

Service as worship.

Liberty is the first condition of growth. It is wrong, a thousand times wrong, if any of you dares to say, 'I will work out the salvation of this woman or child.' Hands off! They will solve their own problems. Who are you to assume that you know everything? How dare you think that you have the right over God? For, don't you know that every soul is the Soul of God? Look upon every one as God. You can only serve. Serve the children of the Lord if you have the privilege. If the Lord grants that you can help any one of His children, blessed you are. Blessed you are that that privilege was given to you when others had it not. Do it only as worship.[18]

Assimilation of ideas.

Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making, assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more educa-

tion than any man who has got by heart a whole library. If education were identical with information, the libraries would be the greatest sages in the world and encyclopaedias the Rishis.[19]

Wrong education.

Getting by heart the thoughts of others in a foreign language and stuffing your brain with them and taking some university degrees, you consider yourself educated. Is this education? What is the goal of your education? Either a clerkship, or being a lawyer, or at the most a Deputy Magistrate, which is another form of clerkship — isn't that all? What good will it do you or the country at large? Open your eyes and see what a piteous cry for food is rising in the land of Bharata, proverbial for its food. Will your education fulfil this want?[20] The education that does not help the common mass of people to equip themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy and the courage of a lion — is it worth the name?[21]

The needed education.

We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet.[22] What we need is to study, independent of foreign control, different branches of

the knowledge that is our own, and with it the English language and western science; we need technical education and all else that will develop industries, so that men instead of seeking for service may earn enough to provide for themselves and save against a rainy day.[23]

The goal of man-making.

The end of all education, all training, should be man-making. The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow.[24] The training by which the current and expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful, is called education.[25] What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and secrets of the universe and will accomplish their purpose in any fashion, even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean, meeting death face to face.[26] It is man-making religion that we want. It is man-making theories that we want. It is man-making education all round that we want.[27]

II

THE ONLY METHOD OF EDUCATION

There is only one method by which to attain knowledge, that which is called concentration.[1]

Concentration

The very essence of education is concentration of mind.[2] From the lowest man to the highest *yogi*, all have to use the same method to attain knowledge. The chemist who works in his laboratory concentrates all the powers of his mind, brings them into one focus, and throws them on the elements; the elements stand analysed, and thus his knowledge comes. The astronomer concentrates the powers of his mind and brings them into one focus; and he throws them on to objects through his telescope; and stars and systems roll forward and give up their secrets to him. So it is in every case: with the professor in his chair, the student with his book, with every man who is working to know.[3]

The more the power of concentration, the greater the knowledge that is acquired. Even the

Its power

lowest shoeblack, if he gives more concentration, will black shoes better. The cook with concentration will cook a meal all the better. In making money, or in wor-

shipping God, or in doing anything, the stronger the power of concentration, the better will that thing be done. This is the one call, the one knock, which opens the gates of Nature, and lets out floods of light.[4]

Difference in degree.

Ninety per cent of thought-force is wasted by the ordinary human being and therefore he is constantly committing blunders. The trained man or mind never makes a mistake.[5] The main difference between men and the animals is the difference in their power of concentration. An animal has very little power of concentration. Those who have trained animals find much difficulty in the fact that the animal is constantly forgetting what is told him. He cannot concentrate his mind upon anything for a long time. Herein is the difference between man and the animals. This difference in their power of concentration also constitutes the difference between man and man. Compare the lowest with the highest man. The difference is in the degree of concentration.[6]

Results.

All success in any line of work is the result of this. High achievements in arts, music, etc., are the result of concentration.[7] When the mind is concentrated and turned back on itself, all within us will be our servants,

not our masters. The Greeks applied their concentration to the exernal world and the result was perfection in art, literature etc. The Hindus concentrated on the internal world, upon the unseen realms in the self and developed the science of yoga.[8] The world is ready to give up its secrets if we only know how to knock, how to give the necessary blow. The strength and force of the blow comes through concentration.[9]

Only key to knowledge

The power of concentration is the only key to the treasure-house of knowledge. In the present state of our body we are much distracted, and the mind is frittering away its energies upon a hundred things. As soon as I try to call on my thoughts and concentrate my mind upon any one object of knowledge, thousands of undesired impulses rush into the brain, thousands of thoughts rush into the mind and disturb it. How to check it and bring the mind under control is the whole subject of study in Rajayoga.[10] The practice of meditation leads to mental concentration.[11]

To me the very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collection of facts. If I had to do my education once again, I would not study facts at all. I would develop the power of concentration and detachment, and then with a

perfect instrument, collect facts at will.[12]

Power comes to him who observes unbroken Brahmacharya for a period of twelve years.[13]

Brahmacharya necessary for concentration.

Complete continence gives great intellectual and spiritual power.[14] Controlled desire leads to the highest results. Transform the sexual energy into spiritual energy. The stronger this force, the more can be done with it. Only a powerful current of water can do hydraulic mining.[15] It is owing to want of continence that everything is on the brink of ruin in our country. By observance of strict Brahmacharya all learning can be mastered in a very short time ; one acquires an unfailing memory of what one hears or knows but once.[16] The chaste brain has tremendous energy and gigantic will power. Without chastity there can be no spiritual strength. Continence gives wonderful control over mankind. The spiritual leaders of men have been very continent and this is what gave them power.[17]

Every boy should be trained to practise absolute Brahmacharya and then, and then alone faith and Shraddha will come.[18] Chastity in thought, word and deed always and in all conditions is what is called Brahmacharya.[19] Unchaste imagination is as bad as unchaste action.[20] The Brahmacharin

must be pure in thought, word and deed.[21]

The idea of true Shraddha must be brought back once more to us. The faith in our own selves must be reawakened and then only all the problems which face our country will gradually be solved by ourselves.[22] What we want is this Shraddha. What makes the difference between man and man is the difference in the Shraddha and nothing else. What makes one man great and another weak and low is this Shraddha. My master used to say: he who thinks himself weak will become weak; and that is true. This Shraddha must enter into you. Whatever of material power you see manifested by the western races, is the outcome of this Shraddha, because they believe in their muscles; and if you believe in the spirit how much more will it work![23]

Shraddha, basis of all growth

I beg you to understand this one fact, no good comes out of the man who day and night thinks he is nobody. If a man day and night thinks that he is miserable, low and nothing, nothing he becomes. If you say 'I am, I am', so shall you be. That is the great fact you ought to remember. We are children of the Almighty, we are sparks of the infinite, divine fire. How can we be nothings? We are everything, ready to do everything; we can do

One becomes what one thinks

everything. This faith in themselves was in the heart of our ancestors ; this faith in themselves was the motive power that pushed them forward in the march of civilization. If there has been degeneration, if there has been defect, you will find that degeneration to have started on the day our people lost this faith in themselves.[24]

To preach the doctrine of Shraddha or genuine faith is the mission of my life. Let me repeat to you that this faith is one of the most potent factors of humanity. First have faith in yourselves. Know that though one may be a little bubble and another may be a mountain-high wave, yet behind both the bubble and the wave there is the infinite ocean.[25] The infinite ocean is the background of me as well as you. Mine also is that infinite ocean of life, of power, of spirituality as well as yours. Therefore, my brethren, teach this life-saving, great, ennobling, grand doctrine to your children even from their very birth.[26]

III

EDUCATION FOR CHARACTER

The character of any man is but the aggregate of his tendencies, the sum total of the bent of his mind. As pleasure and pain pass before his soul, they leave upon it different pictures, and the result of these combined impressions is what is called a man's character.[1] We are what our thoughts have made us.[2] Each thought is a little hammer blow on the lump of iron which our bodies are, manufacturing out of it what we want it to be.[3] Words are secondary. Thoughts live; they travel far. And so take care of what you think.

Value of thought-force.

Good and evil have an equal share in moulding character and in some cases misery is a greater teacher than happiness. In studying the great characters the world has produced, I dare say, in the vast majority of cases, it would be found that it was misery that taught more than happiness, it was poverty that taught more than wealth, and

The role of pleasure and pain.

it was blows that brought out their inner fire more than praise.[4] Brought up in the lap of luxury, lying on a bed of roses and never shedding a tear, who has become great? When there comes affection in the heart, when the storm of sorrow blows all round, and it seems as if light will be seen no more, when hope and courage are almost gone, it is then, in the midst of this great spiritual tempest, that the light within gleams.[5]

Result of action.

Using the simile of a lake for the mind, every ripple, every wave that rises in the mind, when it subsides, does not die out entirely, but leaves a mark and a future possibility of that mark coming out again. Every work that we do, every movement of the body, every thought that we think, leaves such an impression on the mind-stuff, and even when such impressions are not obvious on the surface, they are sufficiently strong to work beneath the surface, subconsciously. What we are every moment is determined by the sum total of these impressions on the mind. Each man's character is determined by the sum total of these impressions. If good impressions prevail, the character becomes good, if bad, it becomes bad. If a man continuously hears bad words, thinks bad thoughts, does bad actions, his mind will be full of bad impressions;

and they will influence his thought and work without his being conscious of the fact. In fact, these bad impressions are always working. The sum total of these impressions in him will create the strong motive power for doing bad actions. He will be like a machine in the hands of his impressions.[6]

Formation of character.

Similarly if a man thinks good thoughts and does good works, the sum total of these impressions will be good and they in a similar manner will force him to do good in spite of himself. When a man has done so much good work and thought so many good thoughts, there is an irresistible tendency in him to do good. Even if he wishes to do evil, his mind, as the sum total of his tendencies, will not allow him to do so. He is completely under the influence of the good tendencies. When such is the case, a man's good character is said to be established.[6] If you really want to judge the character of a man, look not at his great performances. Watch a man do his most common actions. Those are indeed the things which will tell you the real character of the great man. Great occasions rouse even the lowest of human beings to some kind of greatness, but he alone is really great whose character is great always — the same wherever he be.[7]

When a large number of these impressions is left on the mind, they coalesce and become a habit.

Habits, good and bad.

It is said, 'Habit is second nature. It is first nature also and the whole nature of man.* Everything that we are is the result of habit. That gives us consolation because, if it is only habit, we can make it and unmake it at any time. The only remedy for bad habits is counter habits. All the bad habits can be controlled by good habits. Go on doing good, thinking holy thoughts continuously. That is the only way to suppress base impressions. Never say any man is hopeless, because he only represents a character, a bundle of habits, which can be checked by new and better ones. Character is repeated habits and repeated habits alone can reform character.[8]

We mould our destinies.

The cause of all apparent evil is in ourselves. Do not blame any supernatural being. Neither be hopeless or despondent, nor think that we are in a place from which we can never escape unless someone comes and gives a helping hand. We are like silkworms. We make the thread ou of our own sub-

* This is based on the Doctrine of Karma and Rebirth by which even at birth, the start of character is founded on previous habit, *viz.*, that of a previous life.

stance and spin the cocoon, and in course of time are imprisoned inside. This network of karma we have woven around ourselves. And in our ignorance we feel as if we are bound, and weep and wail for help. But help does not come from without; it comes from within ourselves. Cry to all the Gods of the universe. I cried for years and in the end I found that I was helped. But help came from within. And I had to undo what I had done by mistake. I had to cut the net which I had thrown round myself. I have committed many mistakes in my life. But mark you, without those mistakes, I should not be what I am to-day. I do not mean that you are to go home and wilfully commit mistakes; do not misunderstand me in that way. But do not mope because of the mistakes you have committed.[9]

Mistakes due to ignorance.

We commit mistakes because we are weak, and we are weak because we are ignorant. Who makes us ignorant? We ourselves. We put our hands over our eyes and weep that it is dark. Take the hands away and there is light. The light exists always for us, the self-effulgent nature of the human soul. Do you not hear what modern scientific men say? What is the cause of evolution? Desire. The animal wants to do something but does not find the environment favourable, and therefore develops a

new body. Who develops it? The animal itself: its will. Continue to exercise your will and it will take you higher. The will is almighty. If it is almighty, you may say: why cannot I do everything? But you are thinking only of your little self. Look back on yourself from the state of the amoeba to the human being; who made all that? Your own will. Can you deny that it is almighty? That which has made you come up so high, can make you go higher still. What you want is character, strengthening of the will.[10]

Build up your character.

If you go home and sit in sack-cloth and ashes, and weep your lives out because you took certain false steps, it will not help you, but will weaken you all the more. If this room is full of darkness for thousands of years and you come in and begin to weep and wail, will the darkness vanish? Strike a match and light comes in a moment. What good will it do to you to think all your lives, 'Oh, I have done evil; I have made many mistakes.'? It requires no ghost to tell us that. Bring in the light and evil goes in a moment. Build up your character and manifest your real nature, the Effulgent, the Resplendent, the Ever-Pure and call it up in every one you see.[11]

IV

DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONALITY

Personal magnetism.

You see what is happening all around us. The world is one of influence. Part of our energy is used up in the preservation of our own bodies. Beyond that, every particle of our energy is day and night being used in influencing others. Our bodies, our virtues, our intellect, and our spirituality, all these are continuously influencing others; and so, conversely, we are being influenced by them. This is going on all around us. Now, to take a concrete example: a man comes, you know he is very learned, his language is beautiful and he speaks to you by the hour — but he does not make any impression. Another man comes, and he speaks a few words, not well arranged, ungrammatical perhaps; all the same, he makes an immense impression. Many of you have seen that. So it is evident that words alone cannot always produce an impression. Words, even thoughts, contribute only one-third of the influence in making an impression, the man, two-thirds. What you call the personal magnetism of the man — that is what goes out and impresses you.

Coming to great leaders of mankind, we always find that it was the personality of the man that counted. Now, take all the great authors of the past, the great thinkers. Really speaking, how many thoughts have they thought? Take all the writings that have been left to us by the past leaders of mankind; take each one of their books and appraise them. The real thoughts, new and genuine, that have been thought in this world up to this time, amount to only a handful. Read in their books the thoughts they have left to us. The authors do not appear to be giants to us, and yet we know that they were great giants in their days. What made them so? Not simply the thoughts they thought, neither the books they wrote, nor the speeches they made, it was something else that is now gone, that is their personality. As I have already remarked, the personality of the man is two-thirds, and his intellect, his words, are but one-third. It is the real man, the personality of the man, that runs through us. Our actions are but effects. Actions must come when the man is there; the effect is bound to follow the cause.

The great leaders.

The ideal of all education, all training, should be this man-making. But, instead of that, we are always trying to polish up the outside. What use

in polishing up the outside when there is no inside? The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow. The man who influences, who throws his magic, as it were, upon his fellow-beings, is a dynamo of power, and when that man is ready, he can do anything and everything he likes: that personality put upon anything will make it work.

Now we see that though this is a fact, no physical laws that we know of will explain this. How can we explain it by chemical and physical knowledge? How much of oxygen, hydrogen, carbon — how many molecules in different positions, and how many cells, etc., etc., can explain this mysterious personality? And we still see, it is a fact, and not only that, it is the real man; and it is that man that lives and moves and works, it is that man that influences, moves his fellow-beings and passes out, and his intellect and books and works are but traces left behind. Think of this. Compare the great teachers of religion with the great philosophers. The philosophers scarcely influenced anybody's inner man, and yet they wrote most marvellous books. The religious teachers, on the other hand, moved countries in their lifetime. The difference was made by personality. In the philosopher it is a faint personality that

influences; in the great Prophets it is tremendous. In the former we touch the intellect, in the latter we touch life. In the one case, it is simply a chemical process, putting certain chemical ingredients together which may gradually combine and under proper circumstances bring out a flash of light or may fail. In the other, it is like a torch that goes round quickly, lighting others.

Science of Yoga.

The science of Yoga claims that it has discovered the laws which develop this personality, and by proper attention to those laws and methods, each one can grow and strengthen his personality. This is one of the great practical things and this is the secret of all education. This has a universal application. In the life of the householder, in the life of the poor, the rich, the man of business, the spiritual man, in every one's life, it is a great thing, the strengthening of this personality. They are laws, very fine, which are behind the physical laws, as we know. That is to say, there are no such realities as a physical world, a mental world, a spiritual world. Whatever is, is one. Let us say, it is a sort of tapering existence, the thickest part is here, it tapers and becomes finer and finer; the finest is what we call

spirit; the grossest, the body. And just as it is here, in the microcosm, it is exactly the same in the macrocosm. This universe of ours is exactly like that; it is the gross external thickness, and it tapers into something finer and finer until it becomes God.

Power in the fine.

We also know that the greatest power is lodged in the fine, not in the coarse. We see a man take up a huge weight, we see his muscles swell, and all over his body we see signs of exertion, and we think the muscles are powerful things. But it is the thin thread-like things, the nerves, which bring power to the muscles; the moment one of these threads is cut off from reaching the muscles, they are not able to work at all. These tiny nerves bring the power from something finer still — thought, and so on. So, it is the fine that is really the seat of power. Of course we can see the movements in the gross; but when fine movements take place, we cannot see them. When a gross thing moves, we catch it, and thus we naturally identify movement with things which are gross. But all the power is really in the fine. We do not see any movement in the fine, perhaps because the movement is so intense that we cannot perceive it. But if by any science, any investigation, we are helped to get hold of

these finer forces which are the cause of the expression, the expression itself will be under control. There is a little bubble coming from the bottom of a lake; we do not see it coming all the time, we see it only when it bursts on the surface; so, we can perceive thoughts only after they develop a great deal, or after they become actions. We constantly complain that we have no control over our actions, over our thoughts. But how can we have it? If we can get control over the fine movements, if we can get hold of thought at the root, before it has become thought, before it has become action, then it would be possible for us to control the whole. Now, if there is a method by which we can analyse, investigate, understand and finally grapple with those finer powers, the finer causes, then alone is it possible to have control over ourselves, and the man who has control over his own mind assuredly will have control over every other mind. That is why purity and morality have been always the object of religion; a pure, moral man has control of himself. And all minds are the same, different parts of one Mind. He who knows one lump of clay has known all the clay in the universe. He who knows and controls his own mind knows the secret of every mind and has power over every mind.

Quickening our growth.

Each man in his childhood runs through the stages through which his race has come up; only the race took thousands of years to do it, while the child takes a few years. The child is first the old savage man — and he crushes a butterfly under his feet. The child is at first like the primitive ancestors of his race. As he grows, he passes through different stages until he reaches the development of his race. Only he does it swiftly and quickly. Now, take the whole of humanity as a race, or take the whole of the animal creation, man and the lower animals, as one whole. There is an end towards which the whole is moving. Let us call it perfection. Some men and women are born who anticipate the whole progress of mankind. Instead of waiting and being reborn over and over again for ages until the whole human race has attained to that perfection, they, as it were, rush through them in a few short years of their life. And we know that we can hasten these processes, if we be true to ourselves. If a number of men, without any culture, be left to live upon an island, and are given barely enough food, clothing and shelter, they will gradually go on and on, evolving higher and higher stages of civilisation. We know also, that this growth can be hastened by additional means. We help the growth of trees, do

we not ? Left to nature they would have grown, only they would have taken a longer time ; we help them to grow in a shorter time than they would otherwise have taken. We are doing all the time the same thing, hastening the growth of things by artificial means. Why cannot we hasten the growth of man ? We can do that as a race. Why are teachers sent to other countries ? Because by these means we can hasten the growth of races. Now, can we not hasten the growth of individuals ? We can. Can we put a limit to the hastening ? We cannot say how much a man can grow in one life. You have no reason to say that this much a man can do and no more. Circumstances can hasten him wonderfully. Can there be any limit then, till you come to perfection ? So, what comes of it ? That a perfect man, that is to say, the type that is to come of this race, perhaps millions of years hence, that man, can come today.

Incarnations and Prophets.

All great Incarnations and Prophets are such men ; they reached perfection in this one life. We have had such men at all periods of the world's history and at all times. Quite recently there was such a man who lived the life of the whole human race and reached the end — even in this life. Even this hastening of the growth must be under

laws. Suppose we can investigate these laws and understand their secrets and apply them to our own needs; it follows that we grow. We hasten our growth, we hasten our development, and we become perfect, even in this life. This is the higher part of our life, and the science of the study of mind and its powers has this perfection as its real end.

The utility of this science is to bring out the perfect man, and not let him wait and wait for ages, just a plaything in the hands of the physical world, like a log of drift-wood carried from wave to wave and tossing about in the ocean. This science wants you to be strong, to take the work in your own hand, instead of leaving it in the hands of nature, and get beyond this little life.[1]

V

THE TEACHER AND THE TAUGHT

Tyagis as teachers.

My idea of education is Gurugriha-vasa. Without the personal life of the teacher, there would be no education.[1] One should live from his very boyhood with one whose character is a blazing fire and should have before him a living example of the highest teaching. In our country the imparting of knowledge has always been through men of renunciation. The charge of imparting knowledge should again fall upon the shoulders of Tyagis.[2]

Ancient system of education.

The old system of education in India was very different from the modern system. The students had not to pay. It was thought that knowledge is so sacred that no man ought to sell it. Knowledge should be given freely and without any price. The teachers used to take students without charge and not only so, most of them gave their students food and clothes. To support these teachers, the wealthy families made gifts to them and they in their turn had to maintain their students.[3] The disciple of old used to repair to the hermitage of the Guru, fuel in hand, and the

Guru, after ascertaining his competence, would teach him the Vedas, fastening round his waist the threefold filament of Munja, a kind of grass as the emblem of his vow to keep his body, mind and speech in control.[4]

There are certain conditions necessary in the taught and also in the teacher.[5] The conditions necessary for the taught are purity, a real thirst after knowledge, and perseverance. Purity in thought, speech and act is absolutely necessary. As for thirst after knowledge, it is an old law that we all get whatever we want. None of us can get anything other than what we fix our hearts upon. There must be a continuous struggle, a constant fight, an unremitting grappling with our lower nature, till the higher want is actually felt and victory is achieved. The student who sets out with such a spirit of perseverance will surely find success at last.[6]

The qualities of the taught.

In regard to the teacher, we must see that he knows the spirit of the scriptures. The whole world reads Bibles, Vedas and Korans; but they are all only words, syntax, etymology, philology — the dry bones of religion. The teacher who deals too much in words and allows the mind to be carried away by the force

The teacher: his qualifications.

of word loses the spirit. It is the knowledge of the spirit of the scriptures alone that constitutes the true teacher.[6] The second condition necessary for the teacher is sinlessness. The question is often asked: 'Why should we look into the character and personality of a teacher?' This is not right. The *sine qua non* of acquiring truth for oneself, or for imparting to others, is purity of heart and soul. He must be perfectly pure and then only comes the value of his words.[7] The function of the teacher is indeed an affair of the transference of something and not one of mere stimulation of existing intellectual or other faculties in the taught. Something real and appreciable as an influence comes from the teacher and goes to the taught. Therefore, the teacher must be pure. The third condition is in regard to the motive. The teacher must not teach with any ulterior selfish motive, for money, name or fame. His work must be simply out of love, out of pure love for mankind at large. The only medium through which spiritual force can be transmitted is love. Any selfish motive, such as the desire for gain or name, will immediately destroy the conveying medium.[8]

It is not easy to be a disciple. The first condition is that the student who wants to know the truth must give up all desires for gain. What we see is

not truth as long as any desire creeps into our minds. So long as there is in the heart the least desire for the world, truth will not come. The rich understand truth much less than the poor people. The rich man has no time to think of anything beyond his wealth and power, his comforts and indulgences. I do not trust the man who never weeps; he has a big block of granite where his heart should be. Therefore knowing what prosperity means and what happiness means, one should give up these and seek to know the truth and truth alone. Unselfishness is more paying, only people have not the patience to practise it. It is more paying from the point of view of health also. Love, truth and unselfishness are not merely moral figures of speech, but they form our highest ideal, because in them lies such a manifestation of power. Self-restraint is a manifestation of greater power than all outgoing action. All outgoing energy following a selfish motive is frittered away; it will not cause power to return to you; but if restrained, it will result in development of power. This self-control will tend to produce a mighty will, a character which makes a Christ or a Buddha.

The second condition is that a disciple must be able to control the internal and external senses. By hard practice he has to arrive at the stage where he

can assert his mind against the commands of nature. He should be able to say to his mind, "You are mine; I order you, do not see or hear anything." Next the mind must be made to quiet down. It is rushing about. Just as I sit down to meditate, all the vilest subjects in the world come up. The whole thing is nauseating. Why should the mind think thoughts I do not want it to think? I am as it were a slave to the mind. No spiritual knowledge is possible so long as the mind is restless and out of control. The disciple has to learn to control the mind.

Also, the disciple must have great power of endurance. Life seems comfortable, and you find the mind behaves well when everything is going well with you. But if something goes wrong, your mind loses its balance. That is not good. Bear all evil and misery without one murmur or hurt, without one thought of unhappiness, resistance, remedy or retaliation. That is true endurance. When my Master, Sri Ramakrishna, fell ill, a Brahmin suggested to him that he apply his tremendous mental power to cure himself; he said that if my Master would only concentrate his mind on the diseased part of the body, it would heal. Sri Ramakrishna answered, "What! Bring down the mind that I've given to God to this little body!" He

refused to think of body and illness. His mind was continually conscious of God; it was dedicated to Him utterly. He would not use it for any other purpose. Remember also the man on the cross! He pitied those who crucified him. He endured every humiliation and suffering. He took the burden of all upon himself: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Such is true endurance. How very high he was above this life, so high that we cannot understand it!

The next condition the disciple must fulfil is to conceive an extreme desire to be free. No one is desiring anything beyond the body. What is the world but a combination of stomach and sex? Look at millions of men and women — that is what they are living for. Take these away from them and they will find their life empty, meaningless and intolerable. Such are we. And such is our mind; it is continually hankering for ways and means to satisfy the hunger of the stomach and sex. These desires of the body bring only momentary satisfaction and endless suffering. It is like drinking a cup of which the surface layer is nectar, while underneath all is poison. But we still hanker for all these things. Renunciation of the senses and desires is the only way out of this misery. If you want to be

spiritual, you must renounce. This is the real test. Give up the world—this nonsense of the senses. There is only one real desire : to know what is true, to be spiritual. No more materialism, no more this egoism. I must become spiritual. Strong, intense must be the desire. If a man's hands and feet were so tied that he could not move and then if a burning piece of charcoal were placed on his body, he would struggle with all his power to throw it off. When I shall have that sort of extreme desire, that restless struggle to throw off this burning world, then the time will have come for me to glimpse the Divine truth.

Our sole concern should be to know the highest truth. Our goal is the loftiest. Let us worship the spirit in spirit, standing on spirit. Let the foundation be spirit ; the middle, spirit ; the culmination, spirit. Stand thou in the spirit ! That is the goal. We know we cannot reach it yet. Never mind. Do not despair, but do not drag the ideal down. The important thing is : how much less you think of the body, of yourself as matter, as dead, dull insentient matter ; how much more you think of yourself as shining immortal being. The more you think of yourself as shining immortal spirit, the more eager you will be to be absolutely free of matter, body and senses. This is the intense desire to be free.

These are the conditions which a man who wants to be a disciple must fulfil ; without fulfilling them he will not be able to come in contact with the true Guru. And even if he is fortunate enough to find him, he will not be quickened by the power that the Guru may transmit. There cannot be any compromising of these conditions. With the fulfilment of these conditions the lotus of the disciple's heart will open and the bee shall come. Then the disciple knows that the Guru was within himself. He opens out. He realises. He crosses the ocean of life goes beyond, and in mercy, without a thought of gain or praise, he in his turn helps others to cross.[9]

Faith in the teacher.

With the teacher our relationship is the same as that between an ancestor and his descendant. Without faith, humility, submission and veneration in our hearts towards the teacher, there cannot be any growth in us. In those countries which have neglected to keep up this kind of relation, the teacher has become a mere lecturer, the teacher expecting his five dollars and the person taught expecting his brain to be filled with the teacher's words and each going his own way after this much is done.[10] But too much faith in personality has a tendency to produce weakness and idolatry. Worship your Guru

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as God, but do not obey him blindly. Love him all you will, but think for yourself.[11]

The teacher must throw his whole force into the tendency of the taught. Without real sympathy we can never teach well.[12] Do not try to disturb the faith of any man. If you can, give him something better, but do not destroy what he has. The only true teacher is he who can convert himself, as it were, into a thousand persons at a moment's notice. The true teacher is he who can immediately come down to the level of the student, and transfer his soul to the student's soul and see through and understand through his mind. Such a teacher can really teach and none else.[13]

Sympathy for the taught.

VI

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religion is the innermost core of education. I do not mean my own or any one else's opinion about religion.[1] The true eternal principles have to be held before the people. First of all we have to introduce the worship of the great saints. Those great-souled ones who have realised the eternal truths are to be presented before the people as the ideals to be followed — Sri Ramachandra, Sri Krishna, Mahavira, Sri Ramakrishna and others. Keep aside for the present the Vrindavan aspect of Sri Krishna and spread far and wide the worship of Sri Krishna roaring out the Gita with the voice of a lion, and bring into daily use the worship of Shakti — the Divine Mother, the source of all power. We now mostly need the ideal of the hero with the tremendous spirit of Rajas thrilling through his veins from head to foot — the hero who will dare and die to know the truth, the hero whose armour is renuncia-

Worship of saints.

tion, whose sword is wisdom. We now want the spirit of the brave warrior in the battle-field.[2]

Ideal of service.

Make the character of Mahavira your ideal. At the command of Ramachandra he crossed the ocean! He had no care for life or death. He was a perfect master of the senses and wonderfully sagacious. Build your life on this great ideal of personal service. Through that ideal all the other ideas will gradually manifest themselves in life. Obedience to the Guru without questioning and strict observance of Brahmacharya — this is the secret of success. As on the one hand Hanuman represents the ideal of service, so on the other he represents leonine courage, striking the world with awe. He has not the least hesitation in sacrificing his life for the good of Rama. A supreme indifference to everything except the service of Rama. Only the carrying out of Sri Rama's behest is the one vow of his life. Such whole-hearted devotion is wanted.[3]

Raise deep and martial notes.

At the present time the worship of the divine play of Sri Krishna with the Gopis is not good. Playing on the flute and so on will not regenerate the country.[4] Playing on the khol and kartal and dancing in the frenzy of the kirtana has degenerated the

whole people. In trying to imitate the highest sadhana, the preliminary qualification for which is absolute purity, they have been swallowed in dire tamas. Are not drums made in the country ? Are not trumpets and kettle-drums available in India ? Make the boys hear the deep-toned sound of these instruments. Hearing from boyhood the sound of effeminate forms of music, the country is well-nigh converted into a country of women. The Damaru and horn have to be sounded, drums are to be beaten so as to raise the deep and martial notes, and with 'Mahavira, Mahavira' on our lips and shouting 'Hara, Hara, Vyom, Vyom', the quarters are to be reverberated. The music which awakens only the softer feelings of man is to be stopped now for some time. The people are to be accustomed to hear the Dhrupad music.[5]

Through the thunder roll of the dignified Vedic hymns life is to be brought back into the country. In everything the austere spirit of heroic manhood should be revived. If you can build your character after such an ideal then a thousand others will follow. But take care that you do not swerve an inch from the ideal. Never lose heart. In eating, dressing or lying, in singing or playing, in enjoyment or disease, always manifest the highest moral courage.[6] Never allow weakness to overtake your

mind. Remember Mahavira, remember the Divine Mother, and you will see that all weakness, all cowardice will vanish at once.[7]

The new religion.

The old religions said that he was an atheist who did not believe in God. The new religion says that he is the atheist who does not believe in himself. But it is not selfish faith. It means faith in all because you are all. Love for yourself means love for all, love for animals, love for everything, for you are all one. It is the great faith which will make the world better. The ideal of faith in ourselves is of the greatest help to us. If faith in ourselves had been more extensively taught and practised, I am sure a very large portion of the evils and miseries that we have would have vanished. Throughout the history of mankind if any motive power has been more potent than another in the lives of great men and women, it is that faith in themselves. Born with the consciousness that they were to be great, they became great.[8]

Strength.

Infinite strength is religion.[9] Strength is goodness, weakness is sin.[10] All sins and all evil can be summed up in that one word : weakness. It is weakness that is the motive power in all evil doing. It is weakness

that is the source of all selfishness. It is weakness that makes man injure others. Let them all know what they are, let them repeat day and night what they are: 'So'ham'. Let them suck it in with their mother's milk, this idea of strength — I am He! This is to be first heard; and then let them think of it; and out of that thought will proceed works such as the world has never seen.[11]

Tell the truth boldly.[12] All truth is eternal. Truth is the nature of all souls.[13] And here is the test of truth: anything that makes you weak physically, intellectually and spiritually, reject as poison. There is no life in it, it cannot be true. Truth is strengthening. Truth is purity, truth is all knowledge. Truth must be strengthening, must be enlightening, must be invigorating.[14] Go back to your Upanishads, the shining, the strengthening, the bright philosophy. Take up this philosophy. The greatest truths are the simplest things in the world, simple as your own existence. The truths of the Upanishads are before you. Take them up, live up to them and the salvation of India will be at hand.[15]

Physical weakness is the cause of at least one-third of our miseries. We are lazy; we cannot combine.[16] We speak of many things parrot-like

but never do them. Speaking and not doing has become a habit with us. What is the cause? Physical weakness. This sort of weak brain is not able to do anything. We must strengthen it. First of all our young men must be strong. Religion will come afterwards. Be strong, my young friends, that is my advice to you. You will be nearer to Heaven through football than through the study of the Gita. You will understand Gita better with your biceps, your muscles, a little stronger. You will understand the mighty genius and the mighty strength of Krishna better with a little strong blood in you. You will understand the Upanishads better and the glory of the Atman, when your body stands firm on your feet and you feel yourselves as men.[17]

Fearlessness.

Strength, strength is what the Upanishads speak to me from every page. It is the only literature in the world, where you find the word 'Abhih', 'Fearless', used again and again. In no other scripture in the world is this adjective applied either to God or man. And in my mind rises from the past the vision of the great emperor of the West, Alexander the Great, and I see as it were in a picture the great monarch standing on the banks of the Indus, talking to one of our sannyasins in the forest: the old man he was

talking to, perhaps naked, stark naked, sitting upon a block of stone, and the Emperor astonished at his wisdom tempting him with gold and honour, to come over to Greece. And this man smiles at his gold and smiles at his temptations, and refuses. And then the Emperor standing in his authority as Emperor says, 'I will kill you if you do not come', and the man bursts into a laugh, and says, 'You never told such a falsehood in your life as you tell just now. Who can kill me? For I am spirit unborn and undecaying.' That is strength![18]

Upanishads, the mine of strength.

There are thousands to weaken us, and of stories we have had enough. Therefore, my friends, as one of your blood, as one that lives and dies with you, let me tell you that we want strength, strength, every time strength. And the Upanishads are the great mine of strength. Therein lies strength enough to invigorate the whole world. The whole world can be vivified, made strong, energised through them. They will call with trumpet voice upon the weak, the miserable and the down-trodden of all races, all creeds and all sects to stand on their feet and be free. Freedom, physical freedom, mental freedom and spiritual freedom are the watchwords of the Upanishads.[19]

But no scriptures can make us religious. We may study all the books that are in the world, yet we may not understand a word of religion or of God.[20] We may talk and reason all our lives, but we shall not understand a word of truth until we experience it ourselves. You cannot hope to make a man a surgeon by simply giving him a few books. You cannot satisfy my curiosity to see a country by showing me a map. Maps can only create curiosity in us to get more perfect knowledge. Beyond that they have no value whatever.[21] Temples and churches, books and forms are simply the kindergarten of religion, to make the spiritual child strong enough to take the higher steps. Religion is not in doctrines or dogmas, nor in intellectual argumentation. It is being and becoming. It is realisation.[22]

Religion is realisation.

We may be the most intellectual people the world ever saw and yet we may not come to God at all. On the other hand, irreligious men have been produced from the most intellectual training. It is one of the evils of western civilization — intellectual education alone without taking care of the heart. It only makes men ten times more selfish. When there is conflict between the heart and the brain, let the heart be followed. It is the heart which takes

Cultivate the heart.

one to the highest plane, which intellect can never reach. It goes beyond the intellect and reaches what is called inspiration.[23] Always cultivate the heart. Through the heart the Lord speaks.[24]

The intensest love that humanity has ever known has come from religion. The noblest words of peace that the world has ever heard have come from men of the religious plane. At the same time the bitterest denunciation that the world has ever known has been uttered by religious men.[25] Each religion brings out its own doctrines and insists upon them as being the only true ones. Some will even draw the sword to compel others to believe as they do. This is not through wickedness, but through a particular disease of the human mind called fanaticism.[26] Yet out of this strife and struggle, this hatred and jealousy of religions and sects, there have risen from time to time potent voices proclaiming peace and harmony.[27]

Sri Ramakrishna, the messenger of harmony.

The time was ripe for one to be born who would see in every sect the same spirit working : the same God ; one who would see God in every being, one whose heart would weep for the poor, for the weak, for the down-trodden, and at the same time whose grand brilliant intellect would harmonise all conflicting sects not only in India but also outside India ; and

bring a marvellous harmony, the universal religion, into existence. Such a man was born and I had the good fortune to sit at his feet for years.[28] I learned from my Master the wonderful truth that the religions of the world are not contradictory or antagonistic. They are but various phases of one eternal religion.[29] Sri Ramakrishna never spoke a harsh word against anyone. So beautifully tolerant was he that every sect thought that he belonged to it. He loved every one; to him all religions were true.[30] His whole life was spent in breaking down the barriers of sectarianism and dogma.[31]

Not toleration but acceptance.

Let our watchword then be acceptance and not exclusion. Not only toleration, for so-called toleration is often blasphemy. Toleration means that I think that you are wrong and I am just allowing you to live. Is it not blasphemy to think that you and I are allowing others to live? I accept all religions that were in the past and worship them all. I worship God with every one of them, in whatever form they worship Him. I shall go to the mosque of the Mohammedan; I shall enter the Christian's church and kneel before the crucifix. I shall enter the Buddhistic temple, where I shall take refuge in Buddha and in his Law. I shall go into the forest and sit down in meditation with the

Hindu, who is trying to see the Light which enlightens the heart of everyone.

Not only shall I do all these but I shall keep my heart open for all that may come in the future. Is God's book finished ? Or is it still a continuous revelation going on ? It is a marvellous book — these spiritual revelations of the world. The Bible, the Vedas, the Koran and all other sacred books are but so many pages, and an infinite number of pages remain yet to be unfolded. Let us take in all that has been in the past, enjoy the light of the present and open every window of the heart for all that will come in the future. Salutation to all the prophets of the past, to all the great ones of the present and to all that are to come in the future.[32]

VII

THE END AND THE MEANS

One of the greatest lessons I have learned in my life is to pay as much attention to the means of work as to its end. He was a great man from whom I learned it, and his own life was a practical demonstration of this great principle. I have been always learning great lessons from that one principle, and it appears to me that all the secret of success is there: to pay as much attention to the means as to the end.

Means important.

Our great defect in life is that we are so much drawn to the ideal, the goal is so much more enchanting, so much more alluring, so much bigger in our mental horizon, that we lose sight of the details altogether.

But whenever failure comes, if we analyse it critically, in ninety-nine per cent of cases we shall find that it was because we did not pay attention to the means. Proper attention to the finishing, strengthening, of the means, is what we need. With the means all right, the end must come. We forget that it is

Cause of failure.

the cause that produces the effect ; the effect cannot come by itself ; and unless the causes are exact, proper and powerful, the effect will not be produced. Once the ideal is chosen and the means determined, we may almost let go the ideal, because we are sure it will be there, when the means are perfected. When the cause is there, there is no more difficulty about the effect, the effect is bound to come. If we take care of the cause, the effect will take care of itself. The realisation of the ideal is the effect. The means are the cause : attention to the means, therefore, is the great secret of life. We also read this in the Gita and learn that we have to work, constantly work, with all our power ; to put our whole mind in the work, whatever it be, that we are doing. At the same time, we must not be attached. That is to say, we must not be drawn away from the work by anything else, but still we must be able to quit the work whenever we like.

If we examine our own lives, we find that the greatest cause of sorrow is this : we take up something, and put our whole energy on it ; — perhaps it is a failure, and yet we cannot give it up. We know that it is hurting us, that any further clinging to it is simply bringing misery on us ; still, we cannot tear ourselves away from it. The bee came to sip the honey, but its feet stuck to the honey-pot and

it could not get away. Again and again, we are finding ourselves in that state. That is the whole secret of existence. Why are we here? We came here to sip the honey, and we find our hands and feet sticking to it. We are caught, though we came to catch. We came to enjoy; we are being enjoyed. We came to rule; we are being ruled. We came to work; we are being worked. All the time, we find that. And this comes into every detail of our life. We are being worked upon by other minds, and we are always struggling to work on other minds. We want to enjoy the pleasures of life; and they eat into our vitals. We want to get everything from nature, but we find in the long run that nature takes everything from us—depletes us, and casts us aside.

Cause of misery.

That is the one cause of misery: we are attached, we are being caught. Therefore says the Gita: Work constantly; work, but be not attached; be not caught. Reserve unto yourself the power of detaching yourself from everything, however beloved, however much the soul might yearn for it, however great the pangs of misery you feel if you were going to leave it; still, reserve the power of leaving it whenever you want. The weak have no place here, in this life or in any other life. Weak-

ness leads to slavery. Weakness leads to all kinds of misery, physical and mental. Weakness is death. There are hundreds of thousands of microbes surrounding us, but they cannot harm us unless we become weak, until the body is ready and predisposed to receive them. There may be a million microbes of misery, floating about us. Never mind! They dare not approach us, they have no power to get a hold on us, until the mind is weakened. This is the great fact: strength is life, weakness is death. Strength is felicity, life eternal, immortal; weakness is constant strain and misery; weakness is death.

Attachment is the source of all our pleasures now. We are attached to our friends, to our relatives; we are attached to our intellectual and spiritual works; we are attached to external objects, so that we get pleasure from them. What, again, brings misery but this very attachment? We have to detach ourselves to earn joy. If only we had power to detach ourselves at will, there would not be any misery. That man alone will be able to get the best of nature, who, having the power of attaching himself to a thing with all his energy, has also the power to detach himself when he should do so. The difficulty is that there must be as much power of attachment as that of detachment. There

are men who are never attracted by anything. They can never love, they are hard-hearted and apathetic; they escape most of the miseries of life. But the wall never feels misery, the wall never loves, is never hurt; but it is the wall, after all. Surely it is better to be attached and caught, than to be a wall. Therefore the man who never loves, who is hard and stony, escaping most of the miseries of life, escapes also its joys. We do not want that. That is weakness, that is death. That soul has not been weakened that never feels weakness, never feels misery. That is a callous state. We do not want that.

At the same time, we not only want this mighty power of love, this mighty power of attachment, the power of throwing our whole soul upon a single object, losing ourselves and letting ourselves be annihilated, as it were, for other souls — which is the power of the gods — but we want to be higher even than the gods. The perfect man can put his whole soul upon that one point of love, yet he is unattached. How comes this? There is another secret to learn.

The beggar is never happy. The beggar only gets a dole, with pity and scorn behind it, at least with the thought behind that the beggar is a low object. He never really enjoys what he gets.

We are all beggars. Whatever we do, we want a return. We are all traders. We are traders in life, we are traders in virtue, we are traders in religion. Alas! we are also traders in love.

If you come to trade, if it is a question of give-and-take, if it is a question of buy-and-sell, abide by the laws of buying and selling. There is a bad time and there is a good time; there is a rise, and a fall in prices: always you expect the blow to come. It is like looking at the mirror. Your face is reflected: you make a grimace — there is one in the mirror; if you laugh, the mirror laughs. This is buying and selling, giving and taking.

We get caught. How? Not by what we give, but by what we expect. We get misery in return for our love; not from the fact that we love, but from the fact that we want love in return. There is no misery where there is no want. Desire, want, is the father of all misery. Desires are bound by the laws of success and failure. Desires must bring misery.

Secret of happiness.

The great secret of true success, of true happiness, then, is this: the man who asks for no return, the perfectly unselfish man, is the most successful. It seems to be a paradox. Do we not know that every man who is unselfish in life gets cheated, gets

hurt? Apparently, yes. "Christ was unselfish, and yet he was crucified." True, but we know that his unselfishness is the reason, the cause of a great victory, the crowning of millions upon millions of lives with the blessings of true success.

Ask nothing; want nothing in return. Give what you have to give; it will come back to you — but do not think of that now. It will come back multiplied a thousandfold — but the attention must not be on that. Yet have the power to give; give, and there it ends. Learn that the whole of life is giving, that nature will force you to give. So, give willingly. Sooner or later you will have to give up. You come into life to accumulate. With clenched hands, you want to take. But nature puts a hand on your throat and makes your hands open. Whether you will it or not, you have to give. The moment you say, "I will not", the blow comes; you are hurt. None is there but will be compelled, in the long run, to give up everything. And the more one struggles against this law, the more miserable one feels. It is because we dare not give, because we are not resigned enough to accede to this grand demand of nature, that we are miserable. The forest is gone, but we get heat in return. The sun is taking up water from the ocean, to return it in showers. You are a machine for taking and giving;

you take, in order to give. Ask, therefore, nothing in return; but the more you give, the more will come to you. The quicker you can empty the air out of this room, the quicker it will be filled up by the external air; and if you close all the doors and every aperture, that which is within will remain, but that which is outside will never come in, and that which is within will stagnate, degenerate, and become poisoned. A river is continually emptying itself into the ocean and is continually filling up again. Bar not the exit into the ocean. The moment you do that, death seizes you.

Be unattached.

Be, therefore, not a beggar; be unattached. This is the most terrible task of life! You do not calculate the dangers on the path. Even by intellectually recognising the difficulties, we really do not know them until we feel them. From a distance we may get a general view of a park: well, what of that? We feel and really know it when we are in it. Even if our every attempt is a failure, and we bleed and are torn asunder, yet, through all this, we have to preserve our heart—we must assert our Godhead in the midst of all these difficulties. Nature wants us to react, to return blow for blow, cheating for cheating, lie for lie, to hit back with

all our might. Then it requires a super-divine power not to hit back, to keep control, to be unattached.

I know the difficulties. Tremendous they are, and ninety per cent of us become discouraged and lose heart, and in our turn, often become pessimists and cease to believe in sincerity, love, and all that is grand and noble. So, we find men who in the freshness of their lives have been forgiving, kind, simple, and guileless, become in old age, lying masks of men. Their minds are a mass of intricacy. There may be a good deal of external policy, possibly. They are not hot-headed, they do not speak, but it would be better for them to do so; their hearts are dead and, therefore, they do not speak. They do not curse, nor become angry; but it would be better for them to be able to be angry, a thousand times better, to be able to curse. They cannot. There is death in the heart, for cold hands have seized upon it, and it can no more act, even to utter a curse, even to use a harsh word.

All this we have to avoid: therefore I say, we require super-divine power. Superhuman power is not strong enough. Super-divine strength is the only way, the one way out. By it alone we can pass through all these intricacies, through these showers of miseries, unscathed. We may be cut to

pieces, torn asunder, yet our hearts must grow nobler and nobler all the time.

Overcome difficulty by practice.

It is very difficult, but we can overcome the difficulty by constant practice. We must learn that nothing can happen to us, unless we make ourselves susceptible to it. I have just said, no disease can come to me until the body is ready; it does not depend alone on the germs, but upon a certain predisposition which is already in the body. We get only that for which we are fitted. Let us give up our pride and understand this, that never is misery undeserved. There never has been a blow undeserved; there never has been an evil for which I did not pave the way with my own hands. We ought to know that. Analyse yourselves and you will find that every blow you have received came to you because you prepared yourselves for it. You did half and the external world did the other half; that is how the blow came. That will sober us down. At the same time, from this very analysis will come a note of hope, and the note of hope is: "I have no control of the external world, but that which is in me and nearer unto me, my own world, is in my control. If the two together are required to make a failure, if the two together are necessary to give me a blow,

I will not contribute the one which is in my keeping and how then can the blow come? If I get real control of myself, the blow will never come."

We are all the time, from our childhood, trying to lay the blame upon something outside ourselves. We are always standing up to set right other people, and not ourselves. If we are miserable, we say, "Oh, the world is a devil's world." But why should we be in such a world, if we really are so good? If this is a devil's world, we must be devils also, why else, should we be here? "Oh, the people of the world are so selfish!" True enough; but why should we be found in that company, if we be better? Just think of that!

We get what we deserve.

We only get what we deserve. It is a lie when we say, the world is bad and we are good. It can never be so. It is a terrible lie we tell ourselves. This is the first lesson to learn: be determined not to curse anything outside, not to lay the blame upon any one outside, but be a man, stand up, lay the blame on yourself. You will find that is always true. Get hold of yourself.

We are to take care of ourselves—that much we can do—and give up attending to others, for a time. Let us perfect the means; the end will

take care of itself. For the world can be good and pure, only if our lives are good and pure. It is an effect, and we are the means. Therefore, let us purify ourselves. Let us make ourselves perfect.[1]

VIII

EDUCATION OF WOMEN

It is very difficult to understand why in this country so much difference is made between men and women, whereas the Vedanta declares that one and the same Self is present in all beings. Writing down Smritis etc., and binding them by hard rules, the men have turned the women into mere manufacturing machines. In the period of degradation, when the priests made the other castes incompetent to study the Vedas, they deprived the women also of all their rights. You will find in the Vedic and Upanishadic age Maitreyi, Gargi and other ladies of revered memory have taken the place of Rishis. In an assembly of a thousand Brahmanas who were all erudite in the Vedas, Gargi boldly challenged Yajnavalkya in a discussion about Brahman.[1]

In ancient India.

All nations have attained greatness by paying proper respect to women. That country and that nation which do not respect women have never become great, nor will ever be in future.[2] The real Shakti-

Real Shakti worship.

worshipper is he who knows that God is the Omnipresent force in the universe, and sees in women the manifestation of that force. In America men look upon their women in this light and treat their women as well as can be desired, and hence they are so prosperous, so learned, so free and so energetic.[3] The principal reason why our race has so degenerated is that we had no respect for these living images of Shakti. Manu says, 'Where women are respected, there the Gods delight, and where they are not, there all work and efforts come to naught.' There is no hope of rise for that family or country where they live in sadness.[4]

Education will solve women's problems.

Women have many and grave problems, but none that cannot be solved by that magic word: education.[5] What does our Manu enjoin? 'Daughters should be supported and educated with as much care and attention as the sons.' As sons should be married after observing Brahmacharya up to the thirtieth year, so daughters also should observe Brahmacharya and be educated by their parents. But what are we actually doing?[6] They have all the time been trained in helplessness and servile dependence on others; and so they are good only to weep their eyes out at the approach of

the slightest mishap or danger.[7] Women must be put in a position to solve their own problems in their own way. Our Indian women are as capable of doing it as any in the world.[8]

Religion, the centre.

Female education should be spread with religion as its centre. All other training should be secondary to religion. Religious training, the formation of character and observance of the vows of celibacy — these should be attended to.[9] Our Hindu women easily understand what chastity means, because it is their heritage. First of all intensify that ideal within them above everything else, so that they may develop a strong character by the force of which, in every stage of their lives, whether married or single — if they prefer to remain so — they will not be in the least afraid even to give up their lives rather than flinch an inch from their chastity.[10]

Sita, the Ideal.

The women of India must grow and develop in the footprints of Sita. Sita is unique. She is the very type of the true Indian woman, for all the Indian ideals of a perfected woman have grown out of that one life of Sita. And here she stands these thousands of years, commanding the worship of every man, woman and child throughout the length and breadth of Aryavarta.

There she will always be, this glorious Sita, purer than purity itself, all patience, and all suffering. She who suffered that life of suffering without a murmur, she the ever chaste and ever pure wife, she the ideal of the people, our national God she must always remain. She has gone into the very vitals of our race. Any attempt to modernise our women, if it tries to take our women away from that ideal of Sita, is immediately a failure as we see every day.[11]

Training in renunciation.

Studying the present needs of the age, it seems imperative to train some of them up in the ideals of renunciation, so that they will take up the vow of life-long virginity, fired with the strength of that virtue of chastity which is innate in their blood from hoary antiquity. Our motherland requires for her well-being some of her children to become pure-souled Brahmacharins and Brahmacharinis.[12] Even if one amongst the women became a knower of Brahman, then by the radiance of her personality, thousands of women would be inspired and awakened to Truth, and great well-being of the country and society would ensue.[13]

Brahmacharinis of education and character should take up the task of teaching.[14] In villages and towns they must open centres and strive for the

spread of female education. Through such devout preachers of character, there will be the real spread of female education in the country.[15] History and *puranas*, house-keeping and the arts, the duties of home life and the principles that make for the development of character have to be taught.[16] Other matters such as sewing, culinary art, rules of domestic work and upbringing of children will also be taught. Japa, worship and meditation shall form an indispensable part of the teaching.[17] Along with other things they should acquire the spirit of valour and heroism. In the present day it has become necessary for them also to learn self-defence — how grand was the Queen of Jhansi ! [18] So shall we bring to the need of India great fearless women — women worthy to continue the traditions of Sanghamitta, Lila, Ahalya Bai, and Mira Bai — women fit to be mothers of heroes, because they are pure and fearless, strong with the strength that comes of touching the feet of God.[19] We must see to their growing up as ideal matrons of home in time. The children of such mothers will make further progress in the virtues that distinguish themselves. It is only in the homes of educated and pious mothers that great men are born.[20]

Secular education.

Self-defence.

If the women are raised, their children will by their noble actions glorify the name of the country ; then will culture, knowledge, power and devotion awaken in the country.[21]

IX

EDUCATION OF THE MASSES

My heart aches to think of the condition of the poor, the low in India. They sink lower and lower every day. They feel the blow showered upon them by a cruel society, but they do not know whence the blow comes. They have forgotten that they too are men.[1] My heart is too full to express my feelings. So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them.[2] Our great national sin is the neglect of the masses and that is the cause of our downfall. No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses in India are once more well educated, well fed and well cared for.[3]

The great national sin.

A nation is advanced in proportion as education and intelligence spread among the masses. The chief cause of India's ruin has been the monopolising of the whole education and intelligence of the land among a handful of men. If we are to rise again, we shall have to do it by spreading education

Mass education, the only solution.

among the masses.[4] The only service to be done for our lower classes is to give them education to develop their individuality. They are to be given ideas. Their eyes are to be opened to what is going on in the world around them, and then they will work out their own salvation. Every nation, every man and every woman must work out their own salvation. Give them ideas — that is the only help they require and then the rest must follow as effect. Ours is to put the chemicals together, the crystallization comes in the law of nature.[5]

Bring the great spiritual truths within the reach of all.

My idea is first of all to bring out the gems of spirituality that are stored up in our books and in the possession of a few only, hidden as it were in monasteries and forests — to bring them out; to bring the knowledge out of them, not only from the hands where it is hidden, but from the still more inaccessible chest, the language in which it is preserved, the incrustation of centuries of Sanskrit words. In one word, I want to make them popular. I want to bring out these ideas and let them be the common property of all, of every man in India, whether he knows the Sanskrit language or not. The great difficulty in the way is the Sanskrit language, this glorious language of ours, and this difficulty cannot be removed until, if

it is possible, the whole of our nation are good Sanskrit scholars. You will understand the difficulty when I tell you that I have been studying this language all my life and yet every new book is new to me. How much more difficult would it then be for people who never had time to study it thoroughly! Therefore the ideas must be taught in the language of the people.[6] Teach the masses in the vernaculars. Give them ideas; they will get information, but something more will be necessary. Give them culture. Until you can give them that, there can be no permanence in the raised condition of the masses.[7]

Teach through mother tongue.

At the same time Sanskrit education must go along with it, because the very sound of Sanskrit words gives a prestige, a power and a strength to the race.[8] Even the great Buddha made one false step when he stopped the Sanskrit language from being studied by the masses. He wanted rapid and immediate results; and translated and preached in the language of the day — Pali. That was grand; he spoke the language of the people and the people understood him. It spread the ideas quickly and made them reach far and wide. But along with that Sanskrit ought to have been spread. Knowledge

Sanskrit education.

came, but prestige was not there. Until you give them that, there will be another caste created, having the advantage of the Sanskrit language, which will quickly get above the rest.[7]

Remember that the nation lives in the cottage.[9] Your duty at present is to go from one part of the country to another, from village to village, and make the people understand that mere sitting about idly won't do any more. Make them understand their real condition and say, 'O ye Brothers, all arise! awake! How much longer would you remain asleep!' Go and advise them how to improve their own condition and make them comprehend the sublime truths of the *shastras*, by presenting them in a lucid and popular way. Impress upon their minds that they have the same right to religion as the Brahmanas. Initiate, even down to the Chandalas, in these fiery *mantras*. Also instruct them in simple words about the necessities of life, and in trade, commerce, agriculture, etc.[10]

The nation lives in the cottage.

Centuries and centuries, a thousand years of crushing tyranny of castes, kings and foreigners have taken out all their strength. And the first step in getting strength is to uphold the Upanishads and believe 'I am the Soul', 'Me the sword cannot cut; nor weapons

Spiritualize all walks of life.

pierce; me the fire cannot burn; me the air cannot dry; I am the Omnipotent. I am the Omniscient.'[11] These conceptions of the Vedanta must come out from the forest and the cave, they must come out to work at the bar and the bench, in the pulpit and in the cottage of the poor man, with the fishermen that are catching fish and with the students that are studying. They call to every man, woman and child, whatever their occupation, wherever they may be. How can the fishermen and all these carry out the ideas of the Upanisads? The way has been shown. If the fisherman thinks that he is the spirit, he will be a better fisherman; if a student thinks he is the spirit, he will be a better student.[12]

Education to reach every home.

The one thing that is at the root of all evils in India is the condition of the poor.[13] Suppose you open a free school in every village, still it would do no good, for the poverty in India is such that the poor boys would rather go to help their fathers in the fields or otherwise try to make a living than come to the school. Now if the mountain does not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain. If the poor boy cannot come to education, education must go to him. There are thousands of single-minded, self-sacrificing *sannyasins* in our own coun-

try, going from village to village, teaching religion. If some of them can be organised as teachers of secular things also, they will go from place to place, from door to door, not only preaching but teaching also. Suppose two of these men go to a village in the evening with a camera, a globe, some maps etc., they can teach a great deal of astronomy and geography to the ignorant. By telling stories about different nations, they can give the poor a hundred times more information through the ear than they can get in a lifetime through books.[14] Kindle their knowledge with the help of modern science.[15] Teach them History, Geography, Science, Literature and .along with these the profound truths of Religion through these.[16]

Engrossed in the struggle for existence, they had not the opportunity for the awakening of knowledge. They have worked so long like machines and the clever educated section have taken the substantial part of the fruits of their labour. But times have changed. The lower classes are gradually awakening to this fact, and making a united front against this. The upper classes will no longer be able to repress the lower, try they ever so much. The well-being of the higher classes now lies in helping the lower to get their legitimate rights. Therefore I say : set yourself to the task of spreading education

among the masses. Tell them and make them understand, 'You are our brothers, a part and parcel of our bodies.' If they receive this sympathy from you, their enthusiasm for work will be increased a hundredfold.[17]

Requisites for great achievements: Feeling.

Three things are necessary for great achievements. First, feel from the heart. What is in the intellect or reason? It goes a few steps and there it stops. But through the heart comes inspiration. Love opens the most impossible gates. Feel, therefore, my would-be patriots. Do you feel? Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of gods and of sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes? Do you feel that millions are starving to-day, and millions have been starving for ages? Do you feel that ignorance has come over the land as a dark cloud? Does it make you restless? Does it make you sleepless? Has it gone into your blood, coursing through your veins, becoming consonant with your heart-beats? Has it made you almost mad? Are you seized with the one idea of the misery of ruin, and have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property, even your own bodies? Have you done that? That is the very first step.[18]

You may feel then; but instead of spending your energies in frothy talk, have you found any way out, any practical solution, to soothe their miseries, to bring them out of this living death? Yet that is not all. Have you got the will to surmount mountain-high obstructions? If the whole world stands against you, sword in hand, would you still dare to do what you think is right? If your wives and children are against you, if all your name dies, your wealth vanishes, would you still stick to it? Would you still pursue it and go on steadily towards your own goal? As the great king Bhartrihari says, 'Let the sages blame or let them praise; let the Goddess of Fortune come or let Her go wherever She likes, let death come to-day or let it come in hundreds of years, he indeed is the steady man who does not move one inch from the way of truth.' Have you got that steadfastness? If you have these three things, each one of you will work miracles.[19]

The solution.

Steadfastness.

Let us pray, 'Lead, kindly Light'; a beam will come through the dark, and a hand will be stretched forth to lead us. Let each one of us pray day and night for the down-trodden millions of India, who are held fast by poverty, priestcraft and tyranny; pray day and night for them. I care more to preach

Work as worship.

to them than to the high and the rich. I am no metaphysician, no philosopher, nay, no saint. But I am poor. I love the poor. Who feels for the two hundred millions of men and women sunken for ever in poverty and ignorance? Him I call a *mahatman* who feels for the poor. Who feels for them? They cannot find light or education. Who will bring the light to them—who will travel from door to door bringing education to them? Let these people be your God — think of them, work for them, pray for them incessantly — the Lord will show you the way.[20]

X

WHAT IS DUTY

It is necessary to know what duty is. If I have to do something I must first know that it is my duty, and then I can do it. The idea of duty is different in different nations. The Mohammedan says what is written in his book, the Koran, is his duty; the Hindu says what is in the Vedas is his duty; and the Christian says what is in the Bible is his duty. We find that there are varied ideas of duty, differing according to different states in life, different historical periods and different nations. The term "duty", like every other universal abstract term, is impossible to define clearly; we can only get an idea of it by knowing its practical operations and results. When certain things occur before us we have all a natural or trained impulse to act in a certain manner towards them; when this impulse comes, the mind begins to think about the situation. Sometimes it thinks that it is good to act in a particular manner under the given conditions, at other times it thinks that it is wrong to act in the same manner even in the very same circumstances. The ordinary idea of

duty everywhere is that every good man follows the dictates of his conscience.

According to place in life.

But what is it that makes an act a duty ? If a Christian finds a piece of beef before him and does not eat it to save his own life, or will not give it to save the life of another man, he is sure to feel that he has not done his duty. But if a Hindu dares to eat that piece of beef or to give it to another Hindu, he is equally sure to feel that he too has not done his duty ; the Hindu's training and education make him feel that way. Ordinarily if a man goes out into the street and shoots down another man, he is apt to feel sorry for it, thinking that he has done wrong. But if the very same man, as a soldier in his regiment, kills not one but twenty, he is certain to feel glad and think that he has done his duty remarkably well. Therefore we see that it is not the thing done that defines a duty. To give an objective definition of duty is thus entirely impossible. Yet there is duty from the subjective side. Any action that makes us go godward is a good action, and is our duty ; any action that makes us go downward is evil, and is not our duty. From the subjective standpoint we may see that certain acts have a tendency to exalt and ennoble us, while certain other acts have a tendency to degrade and to brutalise us. But

it is not possible to make out with certainty which acts have which kind of tendency in relation to all persons, of all sorts and conditions. There is, however, only one idea of duty which has been universally accepted by all mankind, of all ages and sects and countries; and that has been summed up in a Sanskrit aphorism thus:—"Do not injure any being; not injuring any being is virtue, injuring any being is sin."

The Bhagavad Gita frequently alludes to duties dependent upon birth and position in life. Birth and position in life and in society largely determine the mental and moral attitude of life. It is therefore our duty to do that work which will exalt and ennoble us in accordance with the ideals and activities of the society in which we are born. But it must be particularly remembered that the same ideals and activities do not prevail in all societies and countries; our ignorance of this is the main cause of much of the hatred of one nation towards another. An American thinks that whatever an American does in accordance with the custom of his country is the best thing to do, and that whoever does not follow his custom must be a very wicked man. A Hindu thinks that his customs are the only right ones and are the best in the world, and that whosoever does not obey

The Gita.

them must be the most wicked man living. This is quite a natural mistake which all of us are apt to make. But it is very harmful; it is the cause of half the uncharitableness found in the world.

Therefore the one point we ought to remember is that we should always try to see the duty of others through their own eyes, and never judge the customs of other peoples by our own standards. I am not the standard of the universe. I have to accommodate myself to the world, and not the world to me. So we see that environments change the nature of our duties, and doing the duty which is ours at any particular time is the best thing we can do in this world. Let us do that duty which is ours by birth; and when we have done that, let us do the duty which is ours by our position in life and in society. There is, however, one great danger in human nature, viz., that man never examines himself. He thinks he is quite as fit to be on the throne as the king. Even if he is, he must first show that he has done the duty of his own position; and then higher duties will come to him. When we begin to work earnestly in the world, nature gives us blows right and left and soon enables us to find out our position. No man can long occupy satisfactorily a position for which he is not fit. There is no

use in grumbling against nature's adjustment. He who does the lower work is not therefore a lower man. No man is to be judged by the mere nature of his duties, but all should be judged by the manner and the spirit in which they perform them.

Do your duty.

Later on we shall find that even this idea of duty undergoes change, and that the greatest work is done only when there is no selfish motive to prompt it. Yet it is work through the sense of duty that leads us to work without any idea of duty; when work will become worship — nay, something higher — then will work be done for its own sake. We shall find that the philosophy of duty, whether it be in the form of ethics or of love, is the same as in every other Yoga — the object being the attenuating of the lower self, so that the real higher Self may shine forth; to lessen the frittering away of energies on the lower plane of existence, so that the soul may manifest itself on the higher ones. This is accomplished by the continuous denial of low desires, which duty rigorously requires. The whole organisation of society has thus been developed consciously or unconsciously in the realms of action and experience, where, by limiting selfishness, we open the way to an unlimited expansion of the real nature of man

Duty is seldom sweet. It is only when love greases its wheels that it runs smoothly; it is a continuous friction otherwise. How else could parents do their duties to their children, husbands to their wives and vice versa? Do we not meet with cases of friction every day in our lives? Duty is sweet only through love, and love shines in freedom alone. Yet is it freedom to be a slave to the senses, to anger, to jealousies and a hundred other petty things that must occur every day in human life? In all these little roughnesses that we meet with in life, the highest expression of freedom is to forbear. Women, slaves to their own irritable, jealous tempers, are apt to blame their husbands, and assert their own "freedom", as they think, not knowing that thereby they only prove that they are slaves. So it is wih husbands who eternally find fault with their wives.

Denial of low desires.

The only way to rise is by doing the duty next to us, and thus gathering strength go on until we reach the highest state.

A story — Sannyasin and housewife.

A young Sannyasin went to a forest; there he meditated, worshipped and practised Yoga for a long time. After years of hard work and practice, he was one day sitting under a tree, when some dry leaves fell upon his head. He looked up

and saw a crow and a crane fighting on the top of the tree, which made him very angry. He said, "What! Dare you throw these dry leaves upon my head!" As with these words he angrily glanced at them a flash of fire went out of his head — such was the Yogin's power — and burnt the birds to ashes. He was very glad, almost overjoyed, at this development of power — he could burn the crow and the crane by a look. After a time he had to go to the town to beg his bread. He went, stood at a door and said, "Mother, give me food." A voice came from inside the house, "Wait a little, my son." The young man thought, "You wretched woman, how dare you make me wait! You do not know my power yet." While he was thinking thus the voice came again: "Boy, don't be thinking too much of yourself. Here is neither crow nor crane." He was astonished; still he had to wait. At last the woman came, and he fell at her feet and said, "Mother, how did you know that?" She said: "My boy, I do not know your Yoga or your practices. I am a common everyday woman. I made you wait because my husband is ill, and I was nursing him. All my life I have struggled to do my duty. When I was unmarried, I did my duty to my parents; now that I am married, I do my duty to my husband; that is all the Yoga I practise. But by doing my duty I

have become illumined; thus I could read your thoughts and know what you had done in the forest . . . . . ."

It is the worker who is attached to results that grumbles about the nature of the duty which has fallen to his lot; to the unattached worker all duties are equally good, and form efficient instruments with which selfishness and sensuality may be killed, and the freedom of the soul secured. We are all apt to think too highly of ourselves. Our duties are determined by our deserts to a much larger extent than we are willing to grant. Competition rouses envy, and it kills the kindliness of the heart. To the grumbler all duties are distasteful; nothing will ever satisfy him, and his whole life is doomed to prove a failure. Let us work on, doing as we go whatever happens to be our duty, and being ever ready to put our shoulders to the wheel. Then surely we see the Light! [1]

Do not grumble.

XI

WORK LIKE A MASTER

We read in the Bhagavad-Gita again and again that we must all work incessantly. All work is by nature composed of good and evil. We cannot do any work which will not do some good somewhere; there cannot be any work which will not do some harm somewhere. Every work must necessarily be a mixture of good and evil; yet we are commanded to work incessantly. Good and evil will both have their results, will produce their Karma. Good action will entail upon us good effect; bad action, bad. But good and bad are both bondages of the soul. The solution reached in the Gita in regard to this bondage-producing nature of work is, that if we do not attach ourselves to the work we do, it will not have any binding effect on our soul. We shall try to understand what is meant by this "non-attachment" to work.

Work incessantly.

As the tortoise tucks its feet and head inside the shell, and you may kill it and break it in pieces, and yet it will not come out, even so the character of that man who has con-

Unattached.

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trol over his motives and organs is unchangeably established. He controls his own inner forces, and nothing can draw them out against his will. By this continuous reflex of good thoughts, good impressions moving over the surface of the mind, the tendency for doing good becomes strong, and as the result we feel able to control the Indriyas (the sense-organs, the nerve-centres). Thus alone will character be established, then alone a man gets to truth. Such a man is safe for ever; he cannot do any evil. You may place him in any company, there will be no danger for him. There is a still higher state than having this good tendency, and that is the desire for liberation. You must remember that freedom of the soul is the goal of all Yogas, and each one equally leads to the same result. By work alone men may get to where Buddha got largely by meditation or Christ by prayer. Buddha was a working Jnani, Christ was a Bhakta, but the same goal was reached by both of them. The bad tendencies are to be counteracted by the good ones, and the bad impressions on the mind should be removed by the fresh waves of good ones, until all that is evil almost disappears, or is subdued and held in control in a corner of the mind; but after that, the good tendencies have also to be conquered. Thus the "attached" becomes the "unattached". Work, but let not

the action or the thought produce a deep impression on the mind. Let the ripples come and go, let huge actions proceed from the muscles and the brain, but let them not make any deep impression on the soul.

How to do it.

How can this be done? We see that the impression of any action to which we attach ourselves, remains. I may meet hundreds of persons during the day, and among them meet also one whom I love; and when I retire at night I may try to think of all the faces I saw, but only that face comes before the mind — the face which I met perhaps only for one minute, and which I loved; all the others have vanished. My attachment to this particular person caused a deeper impression on my mind than all the other faces. Physiologically, the impressions have all been the same; every one of the faces that I saw pictured itself on the retina, and the brain took the pictures in, and yet there was no similarity of effect upon the mind. Most of the faces, perhaps, were entirely new faces, about which I had never thought before, but that one face of which I got only a glimpse found associations inside. Perhaps I had pictured him in my mind for years, knew hundreds of things about him, and this one new vision of him awakened hundreds of sleeping memories in my

mind and this one impression having been repeated perhaps a hundred times more than those of the different faces together, will produce a great effect on the mind.

Work like a master.

The whole gist of this teaching is that you should work like a master and not as a slave; work incessantly, but do not do slave's work. Do you not see how everybody works? Nobody can be altogether at rest; ninety-nine per cent of mankind work like slaves, and the result is misery; it is all selfish work. Work through freedom! Work through love! The word "love" is very difficult to understand; love never comes until there is freedom. There is no true love possible in the slave. If you buy a slave and tie him down in chains and make him work for you, he will work like a drudge, but there will be no love in him. So when we ourselves work for the things of the world as slaves, there can be no love in us, and our work is not true work. This is true of work done for relatives and friends, and is true of work done for our own selves. Selfish work is slave's work; and there is a test. Every act of love brings happiness; there is no act of love which does not bring peace and blessedness as its reaction. Real existence, real knowledge, and real love are eternally connected with one another, the

three in one; where one of them is, the others also must be; they are the three aspects of the One without a second — the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. When that existence becomes relative, we see it as the world; that knowledge becomes in its turn modified into the knowledge of the things of the world; and that bliss forms the foundation of all true love known to the heart of man. Therefore true love can never react so as to cause pain either to the lover or to the beloved. Suppose a man loves a woman; he wishes to have her all to himself and feels extremely jealous about her every movement; he wants her to sit near him, to stand near him, and to eat and move at his bidding. He is a slave to her and wishes to have her as his slave. That is not love; it is a kind of morbid affection of the slave, insinuating itself as love. It cannot be love, because it is painful; if she does not do what he wants, it brings him pain. With love there is no painful reaction; love only brings a reaction of bliss; if it does not, it is not love; it is mistaking something else for love. When you have succeeded in loving your husband, your wife, your children, the whole world, the universe, in such a manner that there is no reaction of pain or jealousy, no selfish feeling, then you are in a fit state to be unattached.

Don't expect.

Do you ask anything from your children in return for what you have given them? It is your duty to work for them, and there the matter ends. In whatever you do for a particular person, a city, or a state, assume the same attitude towards it as you have towards your children — expect nothing in return. If you can invariably take the position of a giver, in which everything given by you is a free offering to the world, without any thought of return, then will your work bring you no attachment. Attachment comes only where we expect a return.

Results in bliss.

If working like slaves results in selfishness and attachment, working as masters of our own mind gives rise to the bliss of non-attachment. We often talk of right and justice, but we find that in the world right and justice are mere baby's talk. There are two things which guide the conduct of men: might and mercy. The exercise of might is invariably the exercise of selfishness. All men and women try to make the most of whatever power or advantage they have. Mercy is heaven itself; to be good, we have all to be merciful. Even justice and right should stand on mercy. All thought of obtaining return for the work we do hinders our spiritual progress; nay, in

the end it brings misery. There is another way in which this idea of mercy and sefless charity can be put into practice; that is, by looking upon work as "worship" in case we believe in a Personal God. Here we give up all the fruits of our work unto the Lord, and, worshipping Him thus, we have no right to expect anything from mankind for the work we do. The Lord Himself works incessantly and is ever without attachment. Just as water cannot wet the lotus leaf, so work cannot bind the unselfish man by giving rise to attachment to results. The selfless and unattached man may live in the very heart of a crowded and sinful city; he will not be touched by sin.

The story of the mongoose.

This idea of complete self-sacrifice is illustrated in the following story:—After the battle of Kurukshetra the five Pandava brothers performed a great sacrifice and made very large gifts to the poor. All people expressed amazement at the greatness and richness of the sacrifice, and said that such a sacrifice the world had never seen before. But, after the ceremony, there came a little mongoose, half of whose body was golden, and the other half brown, and he began to roll on the floor of the sacrificial hall. He said to those around, "You are all liars;

this is no sacrifice." "What!" they exclaimed, "You say this is no sacrifice; do you not know how money and jewels were poured out to the poor and every one became rich and happy? This was the most wonderful sacrifice any man ever performed." But the mongoose said: "There was once a little village, and in it there dwelt a poor Brahmin, with his wife, his son and his son's wife. They were very poor and lived on small gifts made to them for preaching and teaching. There came in that land a three years' famine, and the poor Brahmin suffered more than ever. At last when the family had starved for days, the father brought home one morning a little barley flour, which he had been fortunate enough to obtain, and he divided it into four parts, one for each member of the family. They prepared it for their meal, and just as they were about to eat there was a knock at the door. The father opened it, and there stood a guest. Now in India a guest is a sacred person; he is as a god for the time being, and must be treated as such. So the poor Brahmin said, '.Come in, sir; you are welcome.' He set before the guest his own portion of the food, which the guest quickly ate and said, 'Oh, sir, you have killed me; I have been starving for ten days, and this little bit has but increased my hunger.' Then the wife said to her husband, 'Give him my

share,' but the husband said, 'Not so.' The wife however insisted, saying, 'Here is a poor man, and it is our duty as householders to see that he is fed, and it is my duty as a wife to give him my portion, seeing that you have no more to offer him.' Then she gave her share to the guest, which he ate, and said he was still burning with hunger. So the son said, 'Take my portion also; it is the duty of a son to help his father to fulfil his obligations.' The guest ate that, but remained still unsatisfied; so the son's wife gave him her portion also. That was sufficient, and the guest departed blessing them. That night those four people died of starvation. A few granules of that flour had fallen on the floor, and when I rolled my body on them half of it became golden, as you see. Since then I have been travelling all over the world, hoping to find another sacrifice like that, but nowhere have I found one; nowhere else has the other half of my body been turned into gold. That is why I say this is no sacrifice."

This idea of charity is going out of India; great men are becoming fewer and fewer.

Now you see what Karma-Yoga means; even at the point of death to help any one, without asking questions. Be cheated millions of times and never ask a question, and never think of what you are

doing. Never vaunt of your gifts to the poor or expect their gratitude, but rather be grateful to them for giving you the occasion of practising charity to them.[1]

APPENDIX

The references are to THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA, MAYAVATI MEMORIAL EDITION, published by the Advaita Ashrama, 1962, and after. The Roman numbers refer to the volumes and the figures to the pages.

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